

Command Comment

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INTELLIGENCE AND WORLD AFFAIRS

1159. *LIEUTENANT GENERAL VERNON A. WALTERS, Deputy Director, Central Intelligence Agency, in a speech before the Dallas Council on World Affairs, talked on the subject of the CIA and world affairs.*

We no longer live in the world where James Madison said that he hadn't heard from his Minister in Spain for two years and if he didn't hear from him within the next year he was going to send someone to find out what was going on in Spain. We live in a world of instant communications, as you know, where whatever happens requires decisions and actions by our leaders almost immediately. You no longer have the kind of fall-back in time that we've had right up to and including World War II when we had two oceans to protect us and give us time; when we had powerful allies; the world was not a bi-polarized or a tri-polarized world; there were a number of great powers in the world.

Intelligence is Vital

● But today we live in quite a different world -- in a world where instantaneous decisions are required of our leaders. And so, intelligence is more vital -- it has always been vital, it's been overwhelmingly vital -- but it is more vital today than at any time that I know of in the past of human history. So, what is intelligence? Well, intelligence is information concerning foreign countries, their policies, their armed forces, their economies, their financial policies, their research and development, and all the other activities they have that can in some way impact upon us or upon our future. I would say if one asked me what are the great questions that lie before American intelligence today, they can be summed up in about four major items: who will be in control of the

Soviet Union five years from today; what will be their feelings towards us; what will be their general policies towards us and towards the rest of the world; what is there in Soviet research and development today that will be of importance to us in the years ahead? And the same questions are true for China. But in addition to the old kinds of intelligence which were basically military intelligence, we have all kinds of economic intelligence problems today that impact upon us to a degree that has not occurred in the past.

Source of Power

● Now intelligence is knowledge and knowledge is power. People have always thought in the past of intelligence as being merely a power to make war or a power to threaten or a power to overawe someone. The world has changed; intelligence is power in another sense. It is a power for peace.

Intelligence Related to Power

● But the reason why we need intelligence is quite frankly related to power. Foreign nations have not had the capability against the United States that the Soviet Union has today since Valley Forge -- since we became an independent nation. In the past the United States has always been unreachable and unbeatable. We have another country in the world with a larger population than we have, with larger number of arms in any field that you want to examine with the possible exception of missiles on which there has been an agreement. They have an ability to reach us which no nation has had in the past.

Soviet Union/China

● Today the Soviet Union has that power. Tomorrow China will have it. And again we have the fact that we need to know what is going to happen, not just militarily but economically. Now good intelligence has made it possible for us to make certain agreements limiting strategic weapons with the Soviet Union. But we have been able to make them only because, through good intelligence, we have the means of verifying whether they are living up to those agreements or not. And the fact that they know we can verify it nudges them in the direction of not trying to cheat too blatantly, because they know that we will know if they are cheating in any considerable degree.

Problem Area

● One of the problems with intelligence is: when you have a failure it is trumpeted all over the world; when you have a success it is very difficult to talk about because if you talk about it people will know what you know and how you know it and if somebody knows that somebody is looking through the window they are going to pull down the blinds and turn off the light.

Power for Peace

● But intelligence is a power for peace. In my experience on a number of occasions we have brought countries together that were on the edge of war. One of them thought the other was going to attack them. We have been able through good intelligence to convince Country A that it was not going to be attacked by Country B. Through intelligence and liaison contacts we have been able to bring, sometimes, the heads of the intelligence services of these countries together. Now I can't tell you what countries they are or we couldn't do it again. But we have done this on a number of occasions. And so intelligence is a power for peace also. We have been able to reassure people that so and so is not going to jump you.

Now this is not spectacular and it makes no headlines. President Kennedy once told us that the fate of intelligence was to be pilloried for your mistakes, which become well known, and condemned to have your successes passed over in silence.

And so some of these ideas of bringing out estimates where we made a wrong guess and we don't have a crystal ball -- we do our best -- gives you a totally one-sided picture of where we failed. As a matter of fact, the particular instance they're talking about now in the Middle East, we made the post-mortem, we were the ones who analyzed the causes of our failure long before there was any investigation of it. And we turned that in to the President and the Government -- of where we felt we had failed to interpret some of these things correctly. So this is held up today as a proof we failed. Well, when we succeed we don't hold post-mortems so we haven't got any piece of paper that can be held up in the same way. And, in fact, one of the problems is: if you point up your successes you know how these successes were achieved and it is easy for those who look into these matters to see how it was we found out and we won't be able to do it any more.

Soviet Modernization

● One of the great questions that is before us is that we see the Soviet Union, which has developed power in every field. We see them modernizing their missiles, putting multiple independent re-entry vehicles on the various missiles that they have had up to now. We see them deploying four new types of missiles, third generation missiles. We see them building larger submarines with more capabilities for launching missiles. We see them building new modern aircraft with capabilities against the United States. We see them adding tanks to every Soviet motorized rifle division around the world. We see them improving the training of their forces, the logistics of their forces, and the over-all capabilities of their forces. And this has gone far beyond what they require for defense or deterrence, which leaves us with the great question of what do they plan to do with this, how do they plan to use these forces which they have that are far beyond what is required for defense. And these will vitally affect the lives of the American people; these will vitally affect the decisions that our nation will have to make.

Hope for Detente

● Now we all hope that detente works out and it does result in a lessening of tensions, but we have to be realists. We have to live in the real world. They speak of detente, but we see this tremendous uninterrupted continuing effort in every field of their armed forces and scientific research. We hope for detente.

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Intelligence Collection

● How do we collect this intelligence? Well, we collect it in a number of ways. First of all we collect it overtly through the U.S. embassies, through the publications in the press, through the radio broadcasts put out by the various broadcasting systems of the various nations, through the newspapers. Through many, many ways, and it is quite astonishing if you read these regularly how much you can find out.

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If you read the Minsk-Pravda long enough you can find out who's going to the top of the Byelorussian Republic long before it happens. So we collect these; we collect them technologically. I am not going to go into the details of the technological system. I am sure most of them are known to you in a general way. They are immensely sophisticated systems, immensely expensive systems; but they have put us in a position where we no longer can have, as we had in the early Sixties, a debate about a missile gap. That is no longer possible. Technical intelligence is good enough today that we can tell within a few missiles what the relationship of power in this particular area is.

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After Pearl Harbor when we had the last great intelligence investigation we found that we had all the pieces that would have told us what was going to happen but everybody was squirreling away his own little piece and not telling anybody else about it. And this is one of the reasons that led to the creation of the Central Intelligence Agency so that there would be a central place where all this would come together.

New Forms of War

... We face also another problem which are the new forms of war. We always think of war in the old sense of divisions coming across borders and everything else. Two thousand five hundred years ago a Chinese author by the name of Sun Tzu wrote a book called The Art of War. This may be 25 centuries old, but it is as up-to-date as this morning's newspapers. He describes how you go about undoing your enemies and I would simply like to read a direct quotation from what he said, and if it sounds familiar to you, it sounds familiar to me. He said, "The most consummate art is to subdue your enemies without having to fight them. The direct method of war is necessary only on the battlefield; but only the indirect method will obtain true victory and consolidate it." And now he goes ahead to tell you how you undue your enemies without having to fight them. "Denigrate everything that is good in your opponent's country. Involve the leaders in criminal enterprises and deliver them up to the scorn of their fellow countrymen. Undermine them in every way you can. Use the most vile and execrable of individuals. Cause trouble by every means within their government. Spread discord and quarrels in the opposing nation. Agitate the young against the old. Destroy all their means, all of their weapons and above all the discipline

of their armed forces. Cover with ridicule their traditions and values. Be generous in your offers of rewards to obtain information and accomplices. Put secret agents everywhere. Never stint on money or promises; you will reap rich rewards. The supreme excellence is not to win a hundred victories in a hundred battles; the supreme excellence is to subdue your enemies without having to fight them." Now this is the new form of war; this is combined with terrorism acting all over the world today on a scale that is similar to the organization of a nation; and if we are to preserve ourselves from that terrorism we've got to have intelligence against that kind of a terrorist movement. Now a terrorist movement does not have a physical area that it operates like a country. You have to get human sources into it if you are going to find out what happens.

Now we have people in our country today who would have us believe that intelligence is shady, un-American, unworthy, that the Founding Fathers wouldn't have liked it -- it's all very well for those dirty old European countries to do it, but we fine, pure Americans can't stoop to this sort of thing. Well, that is a highly unrealistic and a highly false attitude in regard to American history. We have people in our country today who believe that if we've done some things that were questionable or done some things that perhaps we should not have done, that we can be purified through publicity of them.

I had a head of a European service say to me, "You know, I don't understand why all Americans aren't Catholics." I said, "What do you mean?" "Well," he said, "it's the only religion that affords confession for everybody." And then he paused and he said, "But I suppose it's the fact that it's private that's the drawback." So we have this psychology that we must confess all of our sins to everybody, beating our breasts as though we had done these horrible things.

The Record

Well, the United States, I think, can stand on its record. We've fought two great wars in this century. We defeated our enemies and I don't think in all human history any victorious nation ever did for the defeated nations what we did for those we defeated. We picked them out of the ashes of disaster and I believe we are the only nation in history ever to finance its competitors back into competition. So we may have had some shortcomings here and there, but I think as a nation we can be proud of our record. And what I say as a nation I say for the Central Intelligence Agency.

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Drug Test

● You hear about the drugs -- the drug test -- I think the President spoke for all of us when he said what a terrible thing it was that this man committed suicide after the drugs had been experimented on him. But I think you have to go back to the environment of that time. This was the end of the Korean War. For the first time in American history we saw American soldiers not only refusing to come home, but denouncing their own country. More frightening still, we saw people like Cardinal Mindzenty who had resisted every torture, every imprisonment and every pressure of the Nazis, who had resisted the worse the Nazis could do, coming before us haggard, hollow-eyed to confess everything his Communist captors wanted him to confess. The American people by and large believed that this was being done with mind-bending drugs that could be used against our diplomats, or against our armed forces, that we should look into this, that we should find out how they were used or what could be done about them. And this research was not confined to the CIA or the armed forces. Many of the important institutions of learning in the United States -- the National Institutes of Health and others were engaged in this research. I am not telling you that it was right that the drugs were experimented on the man, but I am just putting the thing a little bit in the context of the time. Now, today we have all this story about toxins that have been discovered. Well, first of all, the toxins have been there for 25 years and nobody knew about it -- we found them ourselves without anybody pushing us to find them, by the simple process of going over our own place and we found these things and we reported them to the Congress. They didn't discover them; we found them. They had been stored there for years. Well, perhaps these were not approved, but the other side had been using these things to kill people in Germany and elsewhere. Again there was the question of knowing what the capabilities were, how you could counter them and what you could have to retaliate if they were used on you. And this was the source and stimulation of that particular research. So, at that time the idea was to have a capability.

The thing happened so long ago that a whole generation of people grew up who did not know that these things were there. We did not know until very carefully we went over our own place; we found them, and when we found them we duly reported them.

Of course, one of the facts that you don't get is that they haven't been used.

Perception of the People

● We are perfectly willing to be responsive to whatever guidance the Congress gives us in this area. We just hope that whatever guidelines they give us contain some mechanism for change, because the perception of the American people, what they are willing to accept, changes with the passage of time.

In 1935 you could have run a segregated school; in 1975 you can't. In 1925, if you tried to run anything but a segregated school you would have been in serious trouble. So, we are perfectly willing -- we understand that we must operate within the standards approved by the American people and we are perfectly willing to do so. But we just hope that as the perception of the American people changes, that these guidelines will provide for some means of changing.

George Washington

● They tell you about the Founding Fathers. Well, in this bicentennial year I have done a little research on the Founding Fathers and come up with some rather interesting items.

George Washington organized three separate kidnap attempts to get hold of Benedict Arnold. And you know what he was going to do with him when he got him. George Washington organized a kidnap attempt on George III's son, Prince William of Britain, who was in New York in 1782. We have Benjamin Franklin. Benjamin Franklin, for three years before the Revolution started, from 1772 to 1775, was the Assistant Postmaster of British North America. You know what he was doing? Opening the British mail and reading it. They caught him and he was fired. Then he went to Paris and at his request the French built a printing press for him. You know what he printed on the press? British currency, British passports, British documentation.

Letter to Chief of Intelligence

● We are told that the Founding Fathers wanted the people to know everything. Well let me just quote you from a letter that George Washington wrote to his chief of intelligence in New Jersey, Colonel Elias Dayton. This is what he said: "The need for procuring good intelligence is so obvious that I need add nothing further about this. All that remains is for me to tell you that these matters must be kept as secret as possible; for the lack of secrecy, these enterprises, no matter how well planned or how promising the outlook, generally fail. I am, Sir, your obedient servant. George Washington"

Dedicated Americans

● I am not an old CIA man. I came there for the first three years ago. All I can tell you is that the people that work in CIA are dedicated American citizens who live by the same standards as everybody else. They are not a breed unto themselves; they are a cross-cut of the United States. They know what the American people will accept and what the American people will not accept. They have no way of fighting back against this torrent of innuendo and slander.

I have faith in the American people. The American people can't be easily fooled. Someone asked me the other day whether, when these investigations are over, we expect to be able to recover the confidence of the American people. I said I was not conscious we had lost it. Today we have four times as many applicants to work at the CIA as we did before this whole business started, and they are the young people coming out of the universities. Okay, the economy may be some part of that; but not four times. The number of people withdrawing their applications for working there is less than at any time in the past.

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We Will Survive

● I said before: the real issue before us is "Will we have an effective intelligence service?" as we enter the last years of this century. And I trust the American people. I think we will. The American people understand what is at stake. They are not always immediate in their judgments, but every indication that we have is that the American society which has given to a higher percentage of its people more of the good things of life than any other system that man has evolved since we came out of the caves, will not stand supinely by and allow itself to be destroyed. Someone once said, "A society that will not defend itself will not survive and will not deserve to survive." We will survive.

-- Dallas, Texas, 16 September 1975.

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